



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2019

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Jarrot Mansion Welcomes Holiday Visitors Including St. Nick

Historic site in Cahokia features the French Père Noël on Dec. 7



CAHOKIA, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is offering a special holiday season treat on Saturday, December 7 with a chance to learn the story of St. Nicholas and tour the beautiful Jarrot Mansion in Cahokia, Illinois.

St. Nicholas – or Père Noël, as he became known to the French – will visit the Jarrot Mansion State Historic Site in Cahokia to greet families and share treats with children amid candlelight and traditional holiday decorations.

The Jarrot Mansion was built around 1810 by merchant Nicholas Jarrot, one of many French settlers who prospered in early Illinois. His home is one of the oldest brick buildings in Illinois. It is usually open only by appointment but will be open for free tours from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 7. St. Nicholas is scheduled to arrive at the house at 11:00 a.m. and will stay until 2:00 p.m. The nearby Holy Family Log Church, which was built in 1799, will also be open for tours.

The traditional St. Nicholas was a generous bishop in 4th century Turkey who felt sorry for the poor, hungry or those who didn't have enough clothing to keep warm. This story was transformed into the tale of Santa Claus, called Father Christmas in England and Père Noël in France.

The French tradition is for children to leave shoes filled with straw and carrots for Père Noël's horse on December 3, St. Nicholas Eve. Père Noël would visit and leave coins, toys and cookies in the shoes.

Visitors on December 7 are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to families in need. All food will be distributed to Cahokia food pantries.

The Jarrot Mansion State Historic Site is located at 124 East First Street in Cahokia. For more information, please call the Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site at 618-332-1782.

The event is co-sponsored by the Jarrot Mansion Project, Inc., Cahokia Connections Church Alliance, Historic St. Louis and the Village of Cahokia. Admission is free. Tours of the Jarrot Mansion and the Holy Family Log Church will be ongoing during this event.

Joyeux Noël!